



## **Twenty-seventh meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention**

*Statement delivered by Merel Terwisscha van Scheltinga*  
June 27th 2023

My name is Merel Terwisscha van Scheltinga and on behalf of the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), I would like to congratulate the Working Group on their work and continuous attention to the Plastics Treaty negotiations.

CIEL welcomes the emphasis on the ongoing negotiations by the Netherlands in their answer to the Survey on balanced and equitable participation and different modalities.

We also applaud the donor countries that are parties to the Aarhus Convention for their financial contribution, which allowed 20 CSO participants to be at INC2 in Paris.

Right before the second round of negotiations, two letters were sent to the UNEP Executive Director and INC Executive Secretary: The first letter<sup>1</sup> from 100 organisations, and the second letter<sup>2</sup> from over 150 civil society groups and scientists from around the world, including the UN Messenger of Peace Dr. Jane Goodall.

In light of the first letter, we note the efforts by the INC Secretariat to facilitate CSOs and Indigenous People's Participation, and to publish a detailed list of participants during INC2. We urge the INC Secretariat to maintain their commitment on Civil Society engagement and guarantee access to the negotiation room for all duly accredited participants at the next INCs. For INC2, the restricted amount of secondary or floating badges limited not only access in the plenary rooms, but also into the UNESCO building itself, hindering many CSOs, Scientists and Indigenous People from participating at the second session of the Plastics Treaty negotiations.

Regarding the second letter, which we are still awaiting a response to, we shared concern about a major threat to an impactful outcome of the Treaty: the growing role that the fossil fuel and petrochemical industries and their lobbyists have in the negotiations. An investigation journalist highlighted the presence of 190 industry lobbyists<sup>3</sup> at INC2. We know that Fossil Fuel and Petrochemical industries' interests are to obstruct, delay and derail the INC's aim to end Plastic pollution.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Letter-2023.04.28-Open-letter-to-UNEP-ED-and-INC-Secretariat.pdf](http://www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Letter-2023.04.28-Open-letter-to-UNEP-ED-and-INC-Secretariat.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-international-stateless/2023/05/24-may-update-petrochemical-letter-with-sign-ons.pdf](http://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-international-stateless/2023/05/24-may-update-petrochemical-letter-with-sign-ons.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [www.mediapart.fr/journal/ecologie/020623/dans-les-negociations-sur-le-plastique-les-industriels-ont-depeche-190-lobbyistes](http://www.mediapart.fr/journal/ecologie/020623/dans-les-negociations-sur-le-plastique-les-industriels-ont-depeche-190-lobbyistes)



To echo the words of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights last November: “The plastic industry has disproportionate power and influence over policy relative to the general public. Human rights are needed to counter-balance these powerful interests. Clear boundaries and policies on conflict of interest should be established for the negotiations process”.

Finally, CIEL would like to bring your attention to the public letter<sup>4</sup> published in the scientific journal *Science* highlighting obstacles to scientific input in global policy. We call on the INC Secretariat to facilitate accreditation of independent scientists to push for a science-based approach.

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<sup>4</sup> [www.science.org/doi/abs/10.1126/science.adi1103](http://www.science.org/doi/abs/10.1126/science.adi1103)